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Gospel workers

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GOSPEL WORKERS;

OR,

A PLAN FOR DOING GOOD,

FOR EVERYBODY.

BY REV. J. CROSS.



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GOSPEL WORKERS.

I.

GOD'S VINEYARD.

WHEN God had finished the work of creation, he pronounced all things very good ; every thing was exactly adapted to the end for which it was made. Man, who was the crowning part of this work, was put in possession of this world as his home. All the beasts of the earth were subject to him. He was the monarch of all his heart could desire. The earth brought forth all he needed without labor or toil ; and while he obeyed God, he was a stranger to sorrow. But by man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; the very earth was cursed in consequence, and he was doomed to earn by the

sweat of his brow what God had richly provided for him, had he remained in a state of innocence.

Not only were his temporal necessities to be supplied by toil, but the moral evil he had introduced must be removed by labor likewise. God could, by an act of his almighty power, have repaired all the injury man had done in a moment of time, either by destroying the creatures who brought disorder into his dominions, and creating others, or by providing an immediate atonement for both soul and body, and reinstating man in his primeval innocence. But God's plan is, to remove the evil man brought into the world through the instrumentality of the same creature that introduced the evil, as a penalty for his disobedience; and in order to prepare the way, his Son Jesus Christ became man, not only to make an atonement for man's sins, but to teach, both by example and precept, how this great work was to be done. Christ, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, could enter into sympathy with man, and work with man. Hence Christians are called "work-

ers together with Christ" in building up his kingdom in this world.

The Son of God, while on earth in our nature, taught the most important truths by parables, always using something with which his hearers were well acquainted. Palestine was a land of vineyards, and thousands earned their daily bread by laboring in them. Mountain-sides were generally chosen as the place to locate the vineyard, and as most of the mountains were stony, it required much labor to prepare the ground and plant the vines and prune them. Some one was appointed to oversee the work, and pay the laborers for their services. The pay was in proportion to the work done. As a matter of justice, those who loitered away their time in idleness received little or nothing when night came. Christ introduced this parable of the vineyard, and the labor in cultivating it, to show how moral evil was to be removed from this sin-cursed world.

This world, morally considered, is a dreary wilderness, and in it God has planted his church, for the removal of the curse intro-

duced by sin. The Jews were God's vineyard in it; for many centuries he bestowed much labor on them, but they proved unfaithful in his service. He sent them prophets and priests. Some they stoned, others they killed or sent away shamefully handled. At last he sent unto them his Son, saying, "Surely they will reverence my Son;" but they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. Yet to their surprise he rose from the dead, and turned them out, and employed another class of laborers in their stead. The first of these laborers were employed from the humblest walks of life, and were called apostles. They immediately went to work, when fully commissioned, with great earnestness, and in one day added three thousand additional laborers to their number. For some years the vineyard was enlarged with great rapidity; all classes and conditions, high and low, rich and poor, entered in to labor. The wilderness and the solitary places were made to blossom as the rose. Had the same zeal and industry been continued up to this present time that was for

half a century, the work might have been done.

True, some of those vineyards that were planted with such rapidity did not continue to bring forth good fruit long, especially those seven planted in Asia, which may be a warning to all unfaithful laborers. There was one Ananias and Sapphira his wife, who engaged to work about that time, and to show their zeal agreed to sell all they had and trust in the Lord of the vineyard for the supply of their wants. But they hid away a part for their own private use, and their deception proved their ruin; they were slain and cast out of the vineyard, as a warning to all insincere laborers. There is great reason to fear that if every Ananias and Sapphira were visited in the same way now, the laborers would be greatly reduced in numbers.

II.

GOD CALLS US TO LABOR.

THE condition on which laborers are employed to work in the Lord's vineyard is, to make a total surrender of themselves, body and soul, to his service, and keep back nothing. When God regenerates a sin-polluted soul, he takes that soul out of the forest of the world, and transplants it into the vineyard or church of Christ. It is cut off from the wild vine, and grafted into Christ, who is the true vine. It becomes one with Christ, and is so identified with him that what interests Christ interests that soul. In a copartnership for carrying on any business, where all the partners are industrious and persevering, they seldom fail of success. But if one half the firm are indolent and lazy, they seldom succeed well. It is just so in working Christ's vineyard; if all are at work, and always at it, success will be certain.

When a soldier enlists in the service of his

country, and takes the bounty or reward offered, he is solemnly bound, as an honest man, to devote all his energies to his country's cause; to neglect this will bring down on his head both punishment and disgrace; and if he runs in the hour of danger, or deserts the battle-field, he loses all just claim to compensation for his time. In the act of justification, the sinner becomes a servant of Christ; he receives bountifully of God's grace; his name is enrolled in the Lamb's book of life; he has renounced the devil as his master, and refuses to do his work any longer. He has accepted of pardon through Christ, and he is now under the most solemn obligations to serve Christ and to work for him. To neglect this is dishonest; it is robbing God of his just rights, and implies either cowardice or treason.

In the conversion of a soul, God designs not only the salvation of that individual, but the improvement of his church or vineyard. If no change were manifested in the conduct of the man, God would have no glory from his work, and his cause would suffer reproach

by it. It is through the instrumentality of converted men and women that God has enlarged his church and brought millions to heaven, and it is through them that all the world is finally to be brought to Christ. They are the agents, his word the instrument they are to work with, and his Spirit the moving power. Their hands must hold the plough and sow the seed, and he has promised they shall gather sheaves with joy.

The same principles govern both the natural and moral world ; the man who ploughs and sows in the natural world seldom begs in harvest. Owing to the unfriendly nature of the soil, his ingatherings may be small, but he seldom fails entirely. So with Christ's workers ; their field may be stony ground, or birds may devour much of the seed, but still faithful labor will secure a harvest. The laborer in the vineyard of Christ is not responsible for the results, only for the labor. The order is, Go work to-day in my vineyard ; God will order the results. In working for Christ, we are not to make our rewards the principal object, as we do in ordinary labor ; but we

are to work for the glory of our Master, that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all for the glory of God. Still, no one pays as punctually as God does. He that waters shall be watered. The moment we begin to work for God, we begin to realize the reward. No wonder there are so many poor Christians in the church—I mean spiritually poor—while there is so little done to increase spiritual wealth.

III.

DUTY OF ALL TO WORK.

IF industry is the avenue to wealth in temporal things, it is doubly so in spiritual things. If indolence leads to bankruptcy in temporal things, it will more certainly in spiritual things. I knew a man once so far gone in spiritual bankruptcy that he was about to leave the church; he came in contact with a genuine gospel worker, who advised him to go to work for Christ without delay, and he would soon get relief. He resolved that evening to go to work for the good of the first sinner he met. Early the next morning the wickedest old sinner in the whole community called on business. The sight of the man, in view of the promise he had made, frightened him; but as soon as the business was transacted for which the man came, he began to preach Christ to him with a stammering tongue. To his utter surprise, in a few moments the man began to weep, and said, "No

man ever spoke to me about my soul before ;” and it resulted in that man’s salvation. In a moment the man that had been without hope for months had his soul overflowing with spiritual joy. The remedy was instantaneous, and so it will be in almost every instance. We give this as an infallible cure for spiritual despondency. A man that will lie down and refuse to exercise his limbs will soon become unable to use them. So the Christian who refuses to exercise the powers of his soul for Christ will soon become a spiritual paralytic, while he that works for Christ will increase his strength from day to day.

Practical Christianity is working for God—not for a day or a year, but for life ; neglecting to do it is practical atheism or denying God’s authority. How is the world to know you belong to Christ, if you do nothing for him? Christ said, “By their fruits ye shall know them ;” and he that is not for Christ is against him ; there is no neutral ground between those who work for Christ and those who work for Belial.

These words of Christ do not refer directly

to the evidences of our good estate, as when we are told to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, or to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. They refer manifestly to working for the salvation of others. This becomes obvious when we look at some of the figurative descriptions of the church of Christ. The church is compared to an army—every Christian to a soldier. All have the same enemies, and are exposed to the same dangers. An army is raised and drilled either to invade an enemy's country or defend our own. A soldier's life is a life of toil and danger, and no one who goes into an army expects to escape toil and hardship, especially when a cunning foe is menacing its ranks. The church of Christ is in an enemy's country, surrounded with vigilant foes, whose leader neither sleeps nor slumbers. His long experience in guerrilla warfare and sudden raids on the church calls for the utmost vigilance on the part of Christ's soldiers. They need to have on their whole armor, and stand in the line of battle. Could any thing but defeat be expected, if half an army were sleep-

ing at their posts unarmed? and would any brave commander respect such soldiers, or give them any reward for such service? And can we expect the church of Christ, with a sleeping army of Christians, to make any advances in this world, which is under the rule of the prince of darkness? Those that lag behind in the day of battle endanger those that go forward; and had better be out of the army than in it. So all those who refuse to work in the church are only so much useless material, to be dragged along by those who do the work. As an army needs hospitals for the sick and wounded, so does the church need her hospitals for weak, sickly Christians. Indeed some churches might well be turned into hospitals, and nurses brought in from other churches to take care of them. Such Christians are not gospel workers.

The soldiers who work in this army, digging trenches and building fortifications, are not working for a despot, who uses them to gratify his own ambition, but for their own defence, and for the protection of their fami-

lies and friends, all exposed to the raids of a malignant enemy, who is going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Now, if it is true that he that provideth not for himself and his household—in temporal things—hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, is it not equally true in relation to eternal things? The man who lets his family starve through idleness is despised in the community. And can a man that neglects to labor for their souls' salvation be respected either by God or man?

IV.

ALL CAN WORK.

THIS command is given to all, from the least to the greatest : fight the good fight of faith, war a good warfare, put on the whole armor of God, resist the devil. All this means the most earnest, energetic working ; it does not mean that they are all the time to lie in winter quarters, or build barracks and fortifications, and await an attack from the enemy. But the church is to be aggressive, make conquests for Christ, expel the usurper and all his hosts. This world was not made for the prince of darkness ; it was made for holy beings, created in the image of God ; but the vile fiend, when he failed to make a conquest of heaven, and was thrust out with his hellish crew, set out to make conquests elsewhere, found his way to this earth, defrauded our first parents of their birthright, and set up his kingdom here. So anxious was he for divine adoration, that he offered to give it to the

Son of God, when He became man, if He would worship him. Hence he has no rights here; he is a vile usurper, and must be dispossessed. This revolted province of Jehovah's dominions has to be wrested from him, and who has so good a right to do it as man? Jehovah could have expelled him in a moment by an act of his almighty power, but he chose to do it by making man the instrument, providing a way by which man could be avenged on his enemy. The seed of the woman was to bruise his head; and when we contemplate the misery and woe he has introduced into this world, the sorrow, toil, and pain he has given to every son and daughter of Adam, is it not marvellous that every one does not exert himself to dispossess him? If it was in the power of any man, or company of men, to do as much injury to a town or city in a day as Satan does, the civil authorities would not be able to prevent their being mobbed. The work of the church is to expel this vile monster out of this beautiful world, and restore it to its primeval state. Every man in this world is our brother; and had it not been for

this malignant spirit, none of us would ever have been ashamed of our kin. Who then but a traitor to God and the whole family of man can remain idle, while this foul spirit is dragging our friends down to his dark and doleful abode?

In the previous part of this series, we have tried to show that it is the duty of all to work for Christ. We now intend to show *how all can work*. All shall be left without excuse.

We take for an illustration the building of the temple in Jerusalem. The plan of the building was given by God himself, and committed to master-builders of his own choosing. Their business was to see how every stone was laid, and that all the vast multitude employed did their work faithfully. No doubt there were various grades of overseers attending on each department of the work, all subject to the master-builders to whom the plan of the building was especially committed. Some were clearing off and levelling the foundation; others were on the mountain-sides, quarrying the huge rocks; others were squaring them to the size directed; others were

engaged in hauling them to the building; others raising them to their appointed place; others making mortar and carrying it to the builders. There were a vast multitude on the mountains of Lebanon, cutting and squaring cedar-trees, and floating them towards Jerusalem; others were working in gold and fine brass; while many were engaged in making the curtains and fringes. Even the children might be combing the wool or camel's hair. Others had to provide the wheat and corn to feed the laborers, and furnish the gold and other materials for the ornaments. Indeed the whole church was at work. All their energies were directed to this one great object, and the result was the most magnificent building the world ever saw. Now, we think this illustration in relation to the division of labor may be with propriety applied to the building of the New Testament church. All can do something, and we now intend to show how it can be done, and that it cannot be left undone without incurring God's displeasure.

The apostles were chosen of God as the

master-builders in the New Testament church ; but they had to quarry the rocks and hew the timber themselves. They built on no other man's foundation ; they went out into the highways and hedges, and compelled men to come in. They did not build fine churches, and settle down over them as pastors ; but they went from place to place, establishing churches and setting under-workmen over them, to feed the flock and direct their labors. We read in the New Testament of both men and women that were fellow-helpers in this great work in the church. We are told that on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were converted, they immediately began to tell of the wonderful works of God ; that is, they began to preach and tell what God had done for their souls : thus began gospel work. The effect of this earnest gospel labor was in a few years to overturn heathen mythology and pagan superstitions, and almost expel the prince of darkness from his strong-holds. And who can doubt that if the same working spirit had continued a few centuries, all the hosts of hell would have been driven

from earth, and the happiness of Eden been regained.

But danger always lurks behind security in an enemy's country. Eternal vigilance can alone secure success. When Aaron and Hur left Moses to hold up his own hands, the Amalekites prevailed. God's mite-givers and mason-tenders must all be busy.

When head workmen began to seek their own aggrandizement, and work by plans of their own inventing, the result was, they marred God's work, and defaced the church by daubing with untempered mortar. The beautiful spiritual temple, commenced by inspired hands, became divided: one was for Paul, another for Apollos, and another for Cephas. But as the work declined in one place, it was begun in another. Those that were persecuted for Christ's sake, and exiled from their homes, began their work in other places; and thus the wrath of man was made to praise God, and faithful labor was rewarded wherever it was performed.

V.

DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

WE have now come to the main object we have in view in writing this series, which is to stir up the officers and private members of our American churches. The erection of the temple would never have been accomplished if none but the overseers had engaged in labor. The quarriers in the mountains, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, had all to work; and so it must be in the church of Christ, before Satan's empire is overturned.

We shall first address ourselves to office-bearers in the church who are not set apart to the work of public official preaching. All denominations have some order of lay rulers in the church, who are chosen on account of their supposed piety and wisdom for that purpose. These persons are generally looked up to in the church, and when faithful are entitled to double honor. They are expected to take the lead as gospel workers in Sabbath-

schools and prayer-meetings, to visit the sick, assist the pastor in watching over the flock, and be foremost in every good word and work; and above all, to be examples in holy living and upright walking before God. They are really the Aarons and Hurs in the camp of the New Testament Israel. In view of their office, there is more expected of them than of the private members. They are the lieutenants, sergeants, and corporals of the Lord's army; the leaders of small subdivisions and scouting parties to guard the outposts. Without such officers an army would be unsafe in an enemy's country; and where they are inefficient and negligent in duty, they endanger the whole army. Even the best selected positions and most carefully arranged line of battle may all be baffled and defeated by a few of these under-officers neglecting their duty. Their responsibility is awful; the battle is for men's souls, that must live or die for ever. The honors that await the victors are not medals of gold, but crowns of glory, that never fade away.

The question may now arise in the minds of some of this class who have done but little

or nothing for Christ, What shall I do, and how shall I do it? My friend, the old proverb is true, "Where there is a will there is a way." The first thing is to get the will. I think I hear some one whispering to himself or herself, The will must come from God, and he has never given me the disposition to be a gospel worker. Did God ever give you an education or a crop without effort on your part to obtain it? I think not. The disposition to work for God is gotten pretty much the same way other things are gotten. Do you read the missionary reports of the various benevolent societies, and keep yourself informed as to the wants of dying souls? Do you notice the thousands all around you that are dying in their sins? And do you believe that eternal banishment from God awaits the finally impenitent? Do you believe the gospel is the remedy, and God's people the agents to apply it; and that he will hold you responsible for your share of the work? If all your neighbors around you were dying with hunger, and you knew where there was plenty of bread, would you excuse yourself on the

ground that God had given you no disposition to go and tell them where it was? No. Their sad condition would stimulate you to act with energy and haste. And why not when the soul is endangered? How can you account for the disposition in the one case and not in the other? Must there not be a lurking infidelity about you somewhere, or an unpardonable ignorance as to your duty? If you believed as fully in soul-danger as you do in body-danger it would be otherwise.

The effect of inefficient officers is to make an inefficient army, and *vice versa*. You are first to stir yourself up by considering the wants of dying souls around you; pray for them till your heart becomes interested in their salvation, and then the work will become delightful. Your neglect of duty discourages those you should lead, and holds them back from God's work. Thus, instead of building Zion's walls, you prevent others from doing it by your example. All such church officers will have a fearful account to render at the last day.

It is your duty to hold prayer-meetings, and

teach in Sabbath-schools, and cut out work for all in your district; to be punctual in attendance at all such places, visit families, talk and pray with them, and use all the means God has put in your power to do good. I know a church that was begun by an elder in a very wicked place; and with the aid of two others he built up a church of two hundred members in ten years, with only occasional preaching. One of them has become a minister, another a general agent of the American Tract Society, and the other a colporteur. These were all humble farmers when they began, but work developed their power and increased their usefulness. Scores are now in the ministry who began their work for God without intending to enter the ministry, and they are generally the most useful men. We have doubts whether any man has sufficient evidence to believe he has been called of God to preach the gospel till he is made the instrument of salvation to some souls. Is there not a school-house near you, or some private dwelling where you can hold a prayer-meeting and Sabbath-school? If so, is it not a place

where you can work for God? You must soon meet your neighbors that live around you in eternity, and give an account for the improvement or misimprovement of your talents and opportunities to do them good. It makes me feel sad when I think of the many office-bearers in the church whom I know, that do not even worship God in their families. A minister once said to me, with tears in his eyes, "I have seven office-bearers in my church, only one of whom has prayers in his house even on Sunday; none of the others ever pray in their families." Within the last fifteen years, several pastors have been called and settled there for a short time, but none have succeeded; neither can any man succeed while that state of things remains. Christ says, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

I entreat you, whoever you are that hold office in the church of Christ, break off these bands of indolence that bind your soul, and go to work for Christ. You will never know of God's salvation in its highest attainable sense until you become a gospel worker.

VI.

DUTIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS.

WE have addressed those who hold office and direct the work of the spiritual temple; but after all we must depend, under God, upon the rank and file for the subjugation of this world to Christ. They have not only to furnish the supplies, but to do much of the labor. Take all the officers of the best army in the world, and send them into an enemy's country without supplies or common soldiers, and they can do but little.

We shall first refer to the matter of supplies. It is the duty of every patriot to support the government under which he lives and from which he derives protection while constitutionally administered; and where this is neglected there is strong reason to doubt the man's patriotism; so there is strong reason to doubt the loyalty of that person to Christ who neglects to furnish supplies according to his ability to Christ's cause. Let such a one

remember that the decisions of the great day are made on the ground not only of sins committed, but of duties neglected. "Inasmuch as ye *did it not* to one of these little ones, ye did it not to me." Read the last part of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and ponder it in your heart. It was He that spoke as man never spoke that uttered that awful sentence, and he will repeat it again on the judgment-day. I that write and you that read must hear it, willing or unwilling. Many professed Christians can find money to spend in the pursuit of pleasure or extravagant dress or equipage, that can find none to aid in Christ's work. Ask them to give to the cause of missions, or to send Bibles and religious tracts to the destitute, and they are too poor; but advertise the sale of profitable stocks, and they have hundreds of dollars to invest. I have known professedly religious men to stay away from their business a whole day when an agent of some benevolent society was about, for fear they would have to give a few dollars; and thus actually to lose more by their absence than they would be

expected to give. Others will tell you to call again, when it is as convenient to give then as at any other time ; but their hope is, that you will either not call, or that they may happen to be absent when you come. Are such gospel workers? Christ's glory and the salvation of souls cannot be uppermost in such hearts. Although the Christian religion is the *cheapest* system of religion to be found on earth, and even cheaper than infidelity, judging from the worldly circumstances of those that embrace the different systems, still many complain of the former. Some able expositors of Jewish law say that the Jews gave one third of the whole of their proceeds each year ; and that just so long as they did it punctually and honestly they increased in wealth, and as soon as they withheld they became poor.

There are some who are not able to go out into the highways and hedges to work, owing to age or bodily infirmities, whom God has blessed with large means. All governments take substitutes in the place of those who cannot go to war, and we have a wonderful case of substitution in the divine government—

God the Father taking his Son Jesus Christ as a substitute for sinners. Those unable personally to engage, can work by proxy. There are many willing and anxious to work for Christ in some department for which they are fitted, but who must have some support, and without it they cannot go. Now, if you pay or aid in paying one of those who could not otherwise go, you are as truly a gospel worker as he that goes. I well knew a lady who was very infirm, and had an annual income of just six hundred dollars. She gave one hundred and fifty dollars of that to a man to visit families and distribute books and tracts in a destitute region. But she did not stop there; she invited a few pious ladies to her house once each week, to unite their prayers with hers to God to bless that man's labors, and few men within my knowledge have ever been so successful in saving souls. How many hundreds there are in our land that could do as this woman. If you are in such circumstances, go and do likewise, and in the great day of eternity you will have the reward of a gospel worker.

Nothing perhaps casts such a dark shadow over the great mass of religious professors as their want of gospel benevolence. Much of the barrenness of soul that seems to pervade the church no doubt comes from this cause. The man that only sows half enough seed on his ground must expect but half a crop, while he that sows bountifully shall reap bountifully. No doubt thousands who are cramped in their worldly circumstances and barren in soul, are so by neglecting their duty to God and man. There are a number of texts that I cannot explain on any other principle. "He that watereth shall be watered;" "there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;" to him that giveth shall be given, good measure and running over. The whole history of the Jewish nation proved this doctrine true, as we have already suggested. Their prosperity ebbed and flowed in proportion to their faithfulness in paying their tithes and offerings. When they complained of their poverty and distress, God tells them the cause: they had robbed him. Then he urges them to prove his faithfulness to his promise by bringing

all their tithes into the storehouse, and see if he would not pour out on them a blessing until there was not room to receive it. Many professors of religion actually speak and act as if God had no claims upon them. How often do we hear men say, Oh, I must be just before I am generous. That is the very principle I want to urge upon you. God's claims are the first. You are one of God's tenants, and justice says, Pay him first. The Jew was to give the first fruits of his field and of his flocks and herds, and till this was done he had no right to use any for himself. Then to be just, you must give God the first, and to do otherwise is dishonest. God is the real owner of all that you have, and if you are a Christian, he has a two-fold right to you: he has the right to you by creation, and a still higher right by redemption. Make no more of these sinful excuses, but become a gospel worker by proxy, if you can in no other way.

VII.

PERSONAL LABOR.

WE now come to speak of the duty of personal labor. This we look upon as indispensable in making high attainments in the divine life, and as perhaps standing above every thing else in promoting our own soul's highest interest. Giving money to keep others at work in the vineyard is an important means of grace; and we generally find that among those who have physical ability, those who give most in proportion to their means, do most. The disposition to give and the will to do generally go hand in hand.

We take the high ground that no soul was ever born of God who cannot labor personally for Christ. High or low, rich or poor, sick or well, you can do something for Christ. A martyr who was gagged during a time of terrible persecution, when asked to recant, pointed to heaven with his finger, as if to say, There is Christ.

The same difficulty will come up to which we alluded in a previous chapter, the want of disposition. The only way you can speedily and certainly get rid of this difficulty is to go to work. The longer you carry a burden the heavier it becomes, or rather, the more unable you are to bear it.

I knew an elder in the Presbyterian church who lived in a village of about five hundred inhabitants. Religion was at a very low ebb. He felt very deeply for the condition of the church and for perishing souls. He resolved to go and visit the families, and scatter religious tracts among them. He selected his tracts, but his heart failed. He put off starting for the time, with a hope that he should get a disposition to go. The more he thought over it, the more lions he saw in the way. The matter lay heavy on his soul night and day. He prayed and prayed again, but all his praying did not remove the lions. At last he started with fear and trembling, and walked into the adjoining house, and began with a stammering tongue. In a moment his tongue was loosed, and his soul fired with a

live coal from God's altar, and the result was the awakening of a young man. He went to the next house without fear. A young girl was awakened. By this time his soul was fired with an irresistible impetuosity, and at the next house two souls were awakened. Special religious services were held, and in a month nearly one hundred souls were hopefully converted. I do not mean to say that it is the duty of every Christian to do just what this man did, and to the same extent that he did it. But there are a thousand ways, in some of which all can be gospel workers.

I well knew a Mr. B——, who was ticket-agent at an important railroad office for five years, and made it a rule to give a small tract with each ticket he sold. He told me that he had received twenty-two letters from persons who had received tracts from him, stating that they had been the means of their conversion. He bought fifty dollars' worth annually out of his salary, to distribute in this way. He told me that when he was married he was an infidel, but his mother-in-law was an untiring tract distributor, and he lived with her, and

she put a tract at his door every Sunday morning. For a year he scarcely read one of them. At last the title of one struck him ; he read, and was saved. This man's position seemed to be an unlikely one to do good, yet he was a successful gospel worker.

Judge S—— of Western Virginia always took a pocket full of tracts to court with him. On one occasion he had before him a desperate character indicted for assault and battery. When he pronounced the sentence of the court on him he gave him a tract. It led to his conversion, and he became an eminent minister of the gospel.

A merchant of my acquaintance put a tract in every bundle of goods he sold. He told me he was astonished at the number of instances in which they had accomplished good, and that he believed they increased his custom and profits five times as much as the tracts cost.

A pious lawyer told me of one of his clients who had spent a large fortune in litigation and intemperance, to whom he gave the tract, *The Fool's Pence*, and it was the means of

his conversion; and now, said he, I always keep them on hand.

A pious father in the city of R—— had a son that became a great prodigal. He finally left home and went to New Orleans. His father sent “Come to Jesus” to him by mail. It led him to Christ, and he returned home “clothed and in his right mind.”

We have stated these facts to show that in every condition of life we can be gospel workers. The facilities for gospel work have been so increased that all are left without excuse. Labor-saving machinery for working in the moral world has fully kept pace with the machinery in cultivating the natural world; and woe unto him that will not use it. Better for him if he had never been born.

VIII.

ASSOCIATED EFFORT.

BEFORE we proceed in urging isolated individual effort in gospel work, we devote a chapter to *associated effort*. While there is much, very much, that can be done by individual effort, still a greater work perhaps may be done by combined effort. There was many a stone in the temple at Jerusalem that no one or two individuals could ever have put in its proper place. Armies, railroad companies, incorporated institutions for humane and charitable purposes, all act on the principle of combination. It gives a moral power just in proportion to the number and influence of those associated together. There is a certain class of people in the world that are more influenced by the name of Judge somebody, or Mrs. Dr. somebody else, than they are by the object to be attained. Thus the withholding of earnest coöperation on the part of

persons of influence is throwing obstacles in the way of doing good. Influence is just so much capital invested in any good association, and will be so rewarded at last.

The great Head of the church seems to take notice of little things—sparrows, mites, and cups of cold water—which many lofty-minded people entirely overlook. The point which we wish to press with all earnestness is, the united effort of God's people of every name in the direct work of saving souls from death.

There are certain great fundamental truths in which all real Christians agree, and without any sacrifice of principle they can unite with their fellow-Christians of other names in pressing them on their fellow-men. The want of this coöperation in gospel work is one of the great reasons why God's work progresses so slowly. Ignorant as the world is of spiritual religion, it has formed a pretty correct idea of the way religion should affect those that embrace it. The world think they should feel alike, act alike, and work alike, and all together. "By this shall the world

know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another;" and people that love one another can certainly work together. What we would urge is, the formation of an association in every town and village in our country, and in all the rural districts, for the promotion of vital godliness and gospel work. No matter by what name you call the association—call them Busy Bees, Christ's Helpers, Gospel Workers, Tract Visitors, or what you please—so they do the work. Neither does it matter where you get the tools you work with, provided the work is done.

In all plans where Christians bear different names and associate together, which experience has proved the best way, they must select tools that all are willing to work with. In other words, form a tract society, divide the place into districts, select such tracts and little books as you all think best suited to save souls, and go once or twice each month to every family; give or loan them what you think is best suited to their case. Go two and two if you can, as the first disciples did. Talk earnestly and affectionately to all you

meet about salvation; meet together once each month to consult and pray over your work, and I have no doubt you will be able to report, as the early disciples did, that the very devils were subject unto you. And what will surprise you most will be the astonishing effect on yourself. It may settle a question that has often troubled you sadly, Am I a child of God, or am I not? If you find the work a pleasant one, and feel that you are in sympathy with Christ, who wept over sinners, then you have evidence that you are his; but if you cannot become interested for souls by this work, then you have made a discovery that may be worth more than a world, that you were one of the self-deceived ones. In either case you may, and I have no doubt will, be greatly the gainer. Many a humble, trembling Christian has been able to read his title clear to mansions in the skies by means of a few hours work.

In rural districts and country congregations I would suggest a plan somewhat different. Raise a fund sufficient to purchase the books and tracts, and appoint as many

persons as are necessary to hand one to each family on each Sabbath when there is preaching. If the stock is sufficient, instruct those that receive it to hand it to some one else; if not, let it be returned on the next Sabbath and another gotten. In this way each family will have a sermon in hand, and perhaps in the head and the heart. In the course of a year each family would have read some of the best religious literature of the age. The labors of the pastor would be backed up and almost doubled. Fifty dollars will supply the largest congregation in our country with a tract every Sabbath.

I believe the arithmetic of earth could never compute the results of one year's labor of this kind, if it was adopted in all the churches in our land. And if we can influence only one hundred villages and churches to enter upon this work, we shall be amply rewarded for writing this series.

If one in five of the five million professed Christians in this land could be induced to enter upon this work, each would have a parish of thirty souls to labor and pray for.

Even if one in fifty would enter on the work, it would more than double the moral power of the church. How then shall we get such a work begun? Let pastors invite all the female members of their churches who can to meet at some point, and lay the matter before them, and organize them into a society, and they will soon raise the funds and have the work begun. Every pastor should labor to unite his people in this work; and the pastor that is the most active in it will reap the most benefit from it. In the army, the commander that can arrange his men so that each one is brought into effective service, other things being equal, will be the most successful. So that pastor that can set his people to work to the best possible advantage doubles his own power and usefulness. The grand defect of this age of the church is, that in so many cases the pastor is left to do all the work himself, except in the Sunday-school, and not unfrequently most of it there too.

IX.

ASSOCIATED EFFORT.

CONTINUED.

As we look upon this as a matter of vital importance, we feel it our duty to devote another chapter to it. In some places it may not be possible to get pastors to enter on this work, for reasons that may be satisfactory to themselves. In such a case we would appeal especially to ladies. To the honor of woman, she was last at the cross and first at the sepulchre. We are fully aware that many are so situated or tied down with domestic cares or infirmities, that they cannot go out to work in the gospel vineyard; but there is scarcely a village of two or three hundred souls in our country, where there is not one or more that, by exercising a little self-denial, could visit every family in the village once or twice each month with a tract or small book; and there is scarcely a village to be found of that size,

where there are not some persons who seldom or never go to church. Now if these persons were dying of some dreadful plague, and you knew a remedy, would you not quit your work and run with all speed to give it to them or tell them of it? Yes, you would even rise out of your bed at midnight to wait upon them; and even if you had doubts about their willingness to receive it, that would not prevent you from doing your duty. Just apply this principle, and act accordingly. These neighbors are dying of sin, and will soon be beyond recovery; you know the remedy, and that if it is received it will certainly cure them. You can tell them you had the same disease, and how it cured you. If they reject both you and the remedy, you have your reward in the consciousness that you have done your duty; you cannot know whether they will reject you or not, till you try; you must not take it for granted that they will, till you make the effort. May it not be that your indifference about your Master's work is the very reason they have neglected their souls? I firmly believe that the indifference of professors of religion

has done much to increase infidelity and retard the progress of God's work. Unless the professed people of God awake to their duty, I fear a few more years will leave us little better than the seven churches of Asia.

A distinguished minister said to the writer a few days ago, "My heart trembles for the ark of God in this land : I hear men in whose piety I once had confidence now saying, ' Religion is played out ; ' and they neither respect God's day nor name." If there ever was a time in the history of God's church when his people were called on to put forth earnest effort, now is the time. We appeal to the pious praying women of the land : Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. It was woman that first proclaimed to the world, "The Lord is risen." Talk to each other about the affairs of Christ's kingdom till your hearts burn like the hearts of the disciples on their way to Emmaus ; pray together, plan together, work together, and God will work with you.

Do n't be afraid of the scoffs of the world ; your Master was scoffed at before you, and blessed are ye when ye are persecuted for

righteousness' sake : rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. But do not many suffer reviling for the want of religion, by the world calling them hypocrites, and simply because they do nothing to distinguish themselves from the world? and what is worse, Christ's cause suffers by the sinful indifference of those who are his professed people more than from any thing else.

I beseech you, do n't throw this little book aside and say, "I am not called on to do any thing of this kind." Where did you get that revelation? Has God told you so? No, my friend, it comes from the prince of darkness. Well he knows that many a Goliath has fallen before just such weapons as we are urging you to use ; and if we can succeed in rousing a few thousand pious women to engage in this work, it will throw all hell into consternation ; it would be equal to Luther before the Diet of Worms. I know very well Satan will say to each one, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." He will arouse all the imaginary lions that cowardice can invent, and no doubt will

overcome some of the more timid. But I can tell you from past experience, and so can all who have tried it, that these lions will flee before you as chaff before the wind or like the *mirage* of the desert. Then you will go on your way rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. As you water others God will water you.

I think I hear some one saying, "I have been visiting and scattering tracts, and I don't see that they have done any good." The prophet Isaiah said, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" But should he therefore have stopped warning the people? We are told of a city where Christ could do no mighty works, because of their unbelief. Should he have returned to heaven, and given up his mission, because of the unbelief of men? How often do preachers labor a whole year without any conversions. Should all ministers that see no immediate fruits of their labors stop preaching? It may be you are one of those from whom God sees it is necessary to conceal the good you do, to keep down

spiritual pride ; or you may neglect to watch for the fruit of your labors. Have you inquired kindly what your neighbor thought of the little book or tract you gave him ? Perhaps not. You may have acted like a man who ploughed and sowed his field, but never returned to see about the crop.

A lady in the city of A—— told me she had visited every family that lived in three squares of the city once each month for fifteen years. For three or four years she put a tract in most cases under the door, and went on without knowing of any good results ; but gradually she became known, and began to talk to the people ; and on inquiry, to her surprise, quite a number spoke of the tracts as the means of their awakening, and she found many of these tracts had been preserved for years. Another, in the city of C——, told me precisely the same of her labors.

I spent a night recently in a thriving farmer's house. Although religious books were but few, in reading in the old family Bible at worship I found a number of tracts in it, some of which looked very old. On inquiry, I found

they had had some of them a score of years. They told me they read them often in connection with the Bible.

A short time ago a tract distributor gave the tract, "What shall I do for Jesus?" to a church-member that had never done any thing in the church. The next day he rented one of the best pews in the church, the next Sunday took a class in the Sabbath-school, and had his pew filled with people—he sat in the choir himself—and when congratulated about the interest he took, said he, "It is due to a little tract." We could fill many pages with facts to encourage such gospel workers.

In the building of the temple, it is said there was a rough unshapely stone that lay in the way most of the time the temple was building, that seemed unfit for use; but in topping out the building, there was a place that no stone could be found to fit. At last the rejected stone was tried, and just suited the place. So there is no stone in the spiritual temple but can be worked in somewhere. I have often heard a pastor of my acquaintance say, that the most useful man in his church was a half

idiot; that notices of extra meetings of any kind, funerals, etc., were by Billy Robertson attended to with such earnestness that he was sure to have a good attendance; that of prayer-meetings in the different neighborhoods that some would have forgotten, they were always reminded a few hours before by him; while his rebukes of sin and neglect of duty were dreaded by all that knew him. Would not many churches be greatly benefited by having such a truth-telling messenger to run around and notify the people of every lecture and prayer-meeting? Judging from the attendance, we suppose many forget such meetings.

In these and other ways every one, from the highest to the lowest, can be a gospel worker. Yes, afflicted, suffering, bed-ridden child of God, even you can work. There is a home work you can do. The most heavenly preacher I ever heard was a Mrs. S——, who had lain on her bed over twenty years. Her tongue was always loosed to speak for Christ, her heart overflowing, and her countenance radiant with spiritual joy. A heavenly influ-

ence pervaded her chamber that all felt who entered it; she had a constant refreshing of soul. Why cannot all be so? Who is to blame for the want of what she had? God giveth willingly and upbraideth not. He says, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find." Thus the way is open for all to get the grace to do as she did. It is said the apostle John lived till he was so old and feeble that all he could say was, "Little children, love one another;" but he said what he could. You can tell of the love of Christ to you, of the grace he gives you to bear the infirmities of life, of your hope of heaven and the joys to come. You can tell your family and neighbors of what Christ has done for you; that you have found in him something that filled the aching void that was in your soul, that there is an ample supply for their souls too, and that they must either seek it or perish. This is gospel work which you can do. Then the reflex influence on your own soul will raise you still higher and higher in the divine life.

X.

DUTIES OF MOTHERS.

THERE is a class of Christians that have in many cases a pretty good excuse for doing little out-door work for Christ, but they have the most important of all work to do—I mean mothers. Their work is to lay the foundation. All know that a safe structure can never be built on a bad foundation. Mothers are Christ's moulders; they give the first shaping to immortal minds; and if the shaping is wrong, it is seldom well righted. The soft clay can be put into any shape; but when once hardened in the fire, it will break, but not bend. Mothers, you hold this clay in your hands; and God has said, Mould it for me. This is your work, and you cannot transfer it to another with safety. God says emphatically to every mother, Train up this child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. *Train*; this word is very expressive in this connection. You

know the vine is *trained* on the wall ; you lead the tender growing branch in whatever direction you wish it to go, but you generally train it upwards. So train that tender branch that God has put into your hand upwards, heavenward, to God and holiness. Many mothers mistake the time to commence this training ; they let the child grow too long before they begin. Some are even afraid that religion, as they call it, would injure the health and depress the spirits of their child. This is a grand mistake ; notwithstanding all that sin has done in the world, still man has conscience and reason, and is susceptible to religious truth ; more so in childhood than in manhood. Little children that are carefully taught make astonishing advances in religious knowledge. The mind may be compared to a great empty reservoir, that must be filled. Mothers have the filling of it at first ; and if it is well filled with the knowledge of divine things, this will keep out many sinful things ; or, as Luther expressed it, " Fill the bushel with wheat, and the devil will get but little chaff in it." In all you say and do your child imitates you ; every

word and action makes an impression lasting as eternity. They become incorporated into its very being; it grows up your second self; your moral character is impressed on it.

Not long since, a good man engaged in distributing books and tracts called at a miserable cabin, and found a woman and seven children in abject poverty. He did not see the husband, but was told by the wife that he was a drunkard, and cruel to his family—even sold their scanty earnings to buy whiskey. He gave his wife a Temperance Manual for him to read. . Some months after he met a little girl on the road, one of this man's daughters. He spoke to the child, and she recognized him, and said, "You are the man that left the book at our house, and you must come in and see dad." He turned to the cabin, and by the time he reached it the little girl had notified her father that the man who brought the book was there. When they met, said he, "Are you the man who brought the book here?" He said he had been there and left a Temperance Manual. The book had been the means of his conversion, and he was now

a praying man. Hear his story: "I was the son of a poor widow, who died when I was six years old. But morning and evening, from the time I could speak, she made me kneel by her side and say my prayers, and then she prayed for me: and the last thing I can recollect of her was, her cold hand on my head when she was dying, uttering a broken prayer for God to send some kind ministering angel to take care of her son. I fell into bad hands; became a bad boy and worse man; but when reading that book, I thought I could hear that last prayer, and feel that cold hand on my head, and I got no rest till I found peace in believing in Christ."

In 1844, the writer became acquainted with Mr. W——, a man of more than ordinary piety; indeed, I have seldom met a man of such untiring zeal in the Master's cause. My business led me to spend some days in his neighborhood, and much of the time with him. As most of our conversation was on the subject of religion, he gave me the following history of his life and conversion. Said he, "My father was a very pious man, but died

when I was fifteen years old ; I was the oldest child of seven, with which my mother was left a widow. She had a farm that by care and industry would support us, and I had to become head farmer. My mother is a devoted Christian, and has been from early life. She worshipped God in her house with us night and morning. For a time I feared her and obeyed her, and we got along very well ; but when I got to be eighteen or nineteen years old, I became very intimate with some wild young men, and began to attend dancing parties and neglect my work : my mother remonstrated with me most earnestly, but in vain. By the time I was twenty-one I was somewhat intemperate, and spent both time and money wickedly and foolishly ; indeed, I had become the ringleader in every kind of sin and folly. My mother often pleaded, with tears in her eyes, for me to stop. She prayed for me whole nights ; and at last the time came for her prayers to be answered. But I look back at that night with horror. I had engaged to attend a large dancing party, and be the head man ; my mother had determined

to do all in her power to prevent my going. I saddled my horse, and came in to dress myself; and when ready, I found my mother at the door to prevent my going out. I told her I was my own man, and I cared not what she said; I would go; and with that thrust her out of my way. The tears rushed to her eyes, and she said, 'Well, James, I will pray for you all night.' I started, full of anticipated pleasure. I had five miles to ride; and by the time I got there a strange, gloomy feeling had come over me. The frolic soon began, and I had to lead off; but my mother's voice and tears were louder than the violin. All the company began to feel depression of spirits, and to complain that they did not enjoy the fun. My distress increased until it was intolerable; I told them the cause was my mother praying at home, and I must go to her. Some laughed at me, but all in vain; I felt impelled to leave. I got my horse and started, with feelings I could not describe. When I got to the house, I went to the window of my mother's room; she was on her knees. I listened to her agonizing prayer until I felt as if my

heart would break. Her cry was, 'O God, have mercy on my son James.' I opened the door, and fell at her side : 'O mother, forgive me. God have mercy on me, a miserable sinner!' In a few moments my soul was filled with joy and peace, and she embraced me as one come from the dead to life again. Her prayer was answered—her faith realized." She was still living, thankful to God for such a son, and he thankful for such a mother.

Here are striking cases of God's faithfulness to a mother's fidelity. The world is full of such cases. I beseech mothers, as you value the well-being of your children for time and eternity, impress on the mind of your infant offspring the great things of eternity. How much of your comfort and happiness depends on it in this world no tongue can tell, and how awful the results of neglecting it in the world to come the judgment-day can alone reveal. Do God's work well in the nursery, and God will reward you both in this life and that which is to come. Neglect it, and you may have to lay your dying head on a thorny pillow, and meet at the judgment a child lost by your neglect.

XI.

DUTIES OF FATHERS.

IN our last chapter we tried to enforce the duties of mothers as all-important ; but it is not to be inferred from this that fathers have no responsibility resting on them to be gospel workers at home. Many a father by his life and conduct undoes much that the mother does. Every father is the high-priest of his household, according to God's established law ; and if he neglects the morning and evening sacrifice, he has no right to expect God's blessing on his household. God has said that he will pour out his fury on the families that call not on his name. You may prosper, so far as this world is concerned, for a time, but as sure, as God is true, your infidelity to him and your family will meet its reward. The example and influence of that class of fathers who profess religion and neglect its duties in their families, is likely rather to retard God's

work in the church and the world than to advance it. We give the following fact as one of thousands that might be given :

“FATHER, I AM LOST, AND YOU ARE TO BLAME FOR IT.” Thus spoke B. W——, a youth of twenty years, a few hours before his death. When he was ten years old, he was a boy of more than ordinary promise. His father was then one of the leading professors of religion, and the best-informed man in the church to which he belonged, prayed in his family and led the social meeting in the church, and was looked upon as a model Christian and his family as a model family. But he loved a dram, and soon became a drunkard. The last time that he partook of the Lord’s supper he was intoxicated ; soon after he was expelled from the church, and all his pretensions to religion were abandoned. He started a distillery, and encouraged his four sons to drink ; next he became sceptical, or pretended to be ; became an open Universalist, and persuaded his sons to believe a lie. His wife was a pious woman, and by a blessing on her influence saved her daughters, who all be-

came members of the church. The three living sons are now old men, all drunkards, in poverty and wretchedness. The father took cold from lying out drunk all night in a storm, and died from its effects soon after, in utter despair.

They lived near me, and I was a daily attendant at the dying bed of B. W——. Although thirty years have passed away, the scenes of the night he died are as fresh as they were the day after. I went there to help take care of him that night. It took four men to hold him; for some time his groans and blasphemies were horrible beyond description. He begged us to drive away the fiends that were torturing him. So awful was the sight, for the last half hour of his life, that every soul fled from the room except his mother. He was some time dead before any one would enter the room. I trembled from head to foot, and so did all present. It seemed as if hell was all around us. On my way home, the moving of a leaf would startle every nerve in my body.

Backsliding parent, this is no tale of fic-

tion, but it is sober reality. This man was once the wealthiest and most esteemed man in the community where he lived, and his children the most promising. But he broke his covenant with God, neglected his duty to his family, set them a godless example, and taught them damnable heresy. He became a drunken sot, and died without hope at three-score and ten years old; he had to listen to one son who, in his dying hours, charged his damnation on him; and left three drunken, blaspheming sons behind him. If this meets the eye of any one who has made the first step towards apostasy or open sin, we pray you stop. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also *reap*. Young man, beware. At ten years old, B. W—— was a model boy; at fifteen, a profane swearer; at eighteen, a drunkard; at twenty on his dying bed, gnashing his teeth and cursing his Maker, and declaring he was in hell. Beware of following a bad example. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Make Christ your friend.

Not long since, a father took his little son to church with him on a communion Sabbath.

As soon as they came out of the church, the little boy said, "Why, father, when did you become a Christian?" "Oh," said the father, "I have been a member of the church for seven years." The boy replied, "Why, father, I never knew that before." It was a barbed arrow, and the family altar was soon erected. How many children might say the same thing: "Why, father, I never knew you were a Christian." Do such men work for God? What will their reward be when they meet their children before the throne of God on the day of judgment? The writer can look back nearly half a century, and call up before him the fathers that lived around him in his boyhood, and can trace their children down to the present time, and he has no knowledge of one case in which children were trained up in the fear of God, and in the end did not come out well. The children of pious parents are now inhabiting the land; while the children of the wicked are in most cases in their graves, or become hewers of wood and drawers of water. And in proportion as the parents were godless, have their children become worthless and de-

graded. Owing to outside influences, there may be a few exceptions.

If you as a father sincerely desire the well-being of your children for time and eternity, I beseech you set before them an example of holy living. The best legacy you can give your son is that of a Christian example. You can lay up for him in this way a fund that will outlive and outride all the financial storms of earth; you may lead him to the Life-boat that will land him safe on the shores of immortality. Example lives in memory, and warns the soul when those who gave it are dead and gone. And then your own happiness depends on your fidelity to duty. I do n't believe it possible for any man who has taken the vows of God upon him, to live in the neglect of duty and be happy. I heard the celebrated Judge B—— once say, in the time of a great revival of religion, "This is the first time I ever had religion to make me happy. I have been a church-member twenty years, and have only had religion enough to make me miserable, because I did not know whether I was dead or alive." Oh how many might

say the same thing. How can any man be happy while a daily covenant-breaker with God, on whose soul rests the solemn obligation to set a godly example before his family? Don't charge the irreligion of your children on your pastor, if you neglect your duty; his work will be prosperous in proportion to the manner in which you do your part. Why is it that a large portion of those that embrace religion in early life are the children of eminently pious parents? Because God is honored in the family with daily adoration. They eat and sleep in a religious atmosphere. The power of habit and all their surroundings lead them heavenward; while all the surroundings of children raised where God is not worshipped, lead them hellward. If this little book falls into the hands of any prayerless father, I pray you, as you value your own happiness in time and eternity, and the eternal well-being of your children, erect the family altar without another day's delay.

XII.

THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH
CALLS FOR SPECIAL EFFORT.

THERE are times in the history of God's church and people that devolve on them especial responsibilities. When an army is engaged in deadly conflict with a powerful foe, and a bayonet charge is made, every nerve and muscle must be strung to the highest pitch. In time of war, the agitation of the public mind is so great and the excitement so intense that those who have but little religious experience are led away. The human mind will not bear to be intensely excited on two different subjects at the same time; the one or the other will predominate. The spirit of war is not the spirit of Christ, but the very reverse; the experience of all ages and countries proves this. We speak what we know when we say that many in our country who were considered as Christians on entering the army, became intemperate and profane; and our half-

deserted churches and thinly attended prayer-meetings give sad testimony, to say nothing of the lack of conversions. These sad tokens should arouse every true child of God to the most earnest effort to save the church. I do not mean to convey the idea that there is any danger of the church being destroyed, as no one believes more firmly than I do that the gates of hell can never overcome it. And I am far from believing what I have heard some men say, that God cannot do without the church in this country. I suppose the Jews once thought so, but he scattered them to the ends of the earth, and his church still lives. Perhaps the seven churches of Asia thought the same thing, but they are gone, and the church still lives. I hope the church is still to live in this land, and that our afflictions will work out for us as a nation a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; but that has to be done through the exertions of God's people. Certain I am that if we sit still and do nothing, God will show to all his intelligent universe that he can do without us. God's sovereignty is manifested in

his church through human instrumentality, without doing violence to the human will or understanding.

We are not to conclude that because God has promised security to his church, the church may neglect her duty. No national emergency, however momentous it may be, can justify neglect of duty to God. We read of a man whom Christ commanded to follow him, whose father was lying dead and must be buried; but he said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the gospel." So the Christian must let nothing come in the way of his duty to God. I have no doubt but the best way to get out of our troubles is to turn to God with our whole hearts; and until this is done what hope have we of seeing their end?

There is another class, and at this day a very important one, to whom we must address a few words. They are soldiers, who have left their homes and all the hallowed influences which were thrown around them by domestic ties and the house of God. Many who while at home were constant in their

attendance at the place of prayer, and gave some evidence of piety, have made shipwreck of their religious character as soon as they were exposed to temptation and ridicule by wicked companions. This is the place, above all others, where stern, unyielding integrity to Christ is required. The moment you begin to yield to your godless associates, you drive the Spirit of God from your heart, and become an easy prey to your adversary. While those who rule over you as officers have a right to implicit obedience from you, remember Christ has higher claims on your fidelity. Guard against the first disloyal word or act to Him who has bought you with his blood. As the power of a consistent Christian life is of greater importance in the army than in almost any other place on earth, so is the danger of backsliding greater. The only hope for the soldier is a stern, steadfast adherence to Christian principle and duty. As a field of labor for Christ and souls, none is more needy. Dying souls are with you in the tent and barracks, as you walk or loiter by the way. You are really like the prisoner inclosed

in the water-cask as a punishment for crime; he must pump or drown. So you must work, or your piety will die. In self-defence, I pray you, be earnest in gospel work. Remember Hedley Vicars.

If I could see all God's professed people earnestly at work in the gospel vineyard, I should feel confident that all our national troubles were near their end.

How shall this be accomplished? Who will begin? Why, my friend, do you begin now. Go to that Christian brother or sister just now, and tell them you have resolved, with God's help, to live no longer at this poor dying rate. Ask them to go with you to Mr. A——'s, and tell him the same; and by this time your soul will be on fire, like the disciples' on the way to Emmaus; each visit will increase the fire in your own soul, and all you enlist with you will be aroused. I have no doubt that if we could arouse but two in each church to go from house to house in this spirit, a few days would produce results that would fill heaven with joy. This is no new experiment; it has been done again and again; and

I never knew it to fail. Oh, Christian brother and sister, is it not worth a trial at such a time as the present, when the ark of God is standing still? No doubt it would be well if many now in the church were out of it; like Gideon's army, it is too large; but many feeble ones can be saved, and there are many out who are to be brought into the fold of Christ. Arise then, gird on the armor, and go forth to conquest and to victory; be faithful unto death, and you will obtain a crown of life. None but victors are crowned, and none but faithful soldiers are victors. God grant to all my readers the rewards of gospel workers.

XIII.

CLOSING APPEAL.

THE writer is about to close this series, in which he has tried briefly to point a way for every one to work for Christ; and if he knows his own heart, it is with the desire to add his earnest testimony, with that of many others, to the importance of all God's professed people being gospel workers.

After nearly forty years' experience in the church, he is confident that nothing else so much retards the progress of the gospel in the world as the indifference of those who are God's professed people. Is it not emphatically true, that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light?" How can the apathy on this subject be reconciled with Bible Christianity? The tree is known by its fruit, not by either the leaves or the flowers. The characteristics of a Christian as laid down by Christ are now but too dimly shadowed forth by his professed

people. Is not the light of many hid under a bushel? What proportion of them are now living epistles, read and known of all men? When and where do you hear the men and women of the world say, See how these Christians love one another? Where is the congregation in which it might not be said of some, See how they hate each other? Do not the rich slight the poor, and pass them by without notice? Do not the poor envy and despise the rich? Some sit in adjoining pews in church for years that scarcely know each other; and a stranger may attend worship with them for months or years without notice, unless he have large wealth or high-sounding titles.

Is it possible for any church to be gospel workers where such a state of things exists? Christian influence, when concentrated and united, is an irresistible power of itself; but when that united influence is accompanied with united effort, the powers of darkness must flee before it. It is then that one will chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. It is then, and not until then, that God's

people become terrible as an army with banners.

Whoever you are, I ask you to ponder the question, What have I done for Jesus? Ministerial brother, whatever position you occupy in the church, have you done all you can? If called to your account to-day, could you say, "Lord, I have done as thou hast commanded?" Have you made such an advance in holiness of life and purity of soul that it gives power to your work, and inspires others to seek after higher attainments in the divine life? Is there not something more still that you can do for Christ? Cast around you and see if you cannot start another little wheel in the machinery that will do gospel work.

Officers of the church of Christ, have you done all you can? Is there not some place in which you can do more yet? Are you an Aaron or a Hur? Are you standing shoulder to shoulder with the pastor in doing God's work? or is your office merely an honorary title? I see no promise of pay to such delinquents.

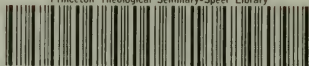
Professional men and men of business, I

appeal to you. What are you doing for Christ? Are you doing nothing more than to give the least pittance that shame and conscience will admit for Christ's work? Your grudging mites and frowning gifts will soon meet you before a frowning Judge, and the hidden talent receive a just reward. I entreat you to begin to-day to work for Christ; both do and give, plough and sow, as you have God for paymaster. Speak a word for Christ. Give a little tract or book, and have something each evening to ask God's blessing upon. That is gospel work.

We appeal again to the Marthas and the Marys: attend well to that little "church in the house;" preach Christ in all you do; draw lessons of instruction for your little ones from all your domestic employments; show them God in every thing. Do good to others also; lay your plans without delay; bring all around you, if possible, to join you, and begin the work forthwith. And may the God of all grace inspire all to become GOSPEL WORKERS.



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